

Docket Item #16  
BAR CASE #2005-0215

BAR Meeting  
October 5, 2005

**ISSUE:** Signs  
**APPLICANT:** Rodrigo Restrepo  
**LOCATION:** 824 King Street  
**ZONE:** CD/Commercial

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the letters be constructed of metal and that the signs be centered underneath the gooseneck lights on the new storefront.

### **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for two individual letter signs for the new business at 824 King Street. The signs, measure 10" in height by 90" in length and read "Top Services". One sign will be located on King Street and the other sign on South Alfred Street.

Staff notes that at the time the applicant submitted this application, the alterations to the storefront under BAR Case #2005-0149 were not yet approved. Therefore, the applicant shows the proposed signs on the existing storefront. The applicant along with Staff has determined that the proposed individual letter signs will work on the new storefront with the exception of a corner sign which has been eliminated from the proposal. Staff notes that a third sign, a proposed wall sign with the business logo, located at the corner of the building did not work with the new design and has been eliminated.

### **II. HISTORY:**

824 King Street is a commercial building dating from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both buildings appear on the Hopkins 1877 City Atlas of Alexandria.

A building permit from 1936 describes the proposal to install new "modern show windows" on the buildings (#2010, 11/2/36). At this time a steel door on the Alfred Street side of the building was also replaced with a new steel door. In August of 1953, the Board approved alterations to the buildings for Gibsons Drug store (permit #11038) which extended the existing plate glass show windows, bulkhead sign band and carrara glass panels.

At the last public hearing, the Board approved alterations to the existing storefront at 824 King Street (BAR Case #2005-0148/149, 9/21/05).

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

According to the applicant, the subject building facing King Street is 20' and 38' facing South Alfred Street. Therefore, the maximum sign area allowed is 20' and 38' respectively. The proposed signs comply with zoning ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objections to the use of simple individual letter signs. The signs at 10" in height comply with the *Design Guidelines* which recommend that lettering heights not exceed 12" (Signs - Page 2). In addition, the signs will be smaller than the existing signs for Ten Thousand Villages and smaller than the neighboring individual letter sign for Bazaak, (approximately 2' in height and 10' in length) at 822 King Street. Staff notes that the images submitted by the applicant are not to scale and make the signs appear larger than they actually are.

The *Design Guidelines* state that sign styles or designs should not postdate the era of the building for which they are intended. For example, signs made of plastic are not appropriate on 18<sup>th</sup> and

19<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures (Signs - Page 3). Staff does not support the use of plastic lettering on this 19<sup>th</sup> century building which is located on a prominent corner of the historic district. The better choice is that they be made of metal.

Given that the materials submitted by the applicant show the existing storefront, Staff is somewhat concerned about the placement of the proposed signs and recommends that they be centered underneath the gooseneck lights. Staff has no objections, however to centering the signs on each elevation if they are installed prior to construction of the new storefront.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the condition that the letters be constructed of metal and that the signs be centered underneath the gooseneck lights on the new storefront.

## CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

### Code Enforcement:

C-1 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.

C-2 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.

### Historic Alexandria:

“Is the middle ‘sign’ counted as a 3<sup>rd</sup> sign?.”